

CLAIMS

1. A method of connecting a client running on a first computing device to a server running on a second computing device, comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) a service installed on the second computing device registering its published name, with a service broker on that device;
- (b) the client sending a message to the service broker specifying the name of the service;

wherein the published name of the service conforms to a structured naming convention.

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2. The method of Claim 1 in which the structured naming convention uses reversed domain information.

- 15 3. The method of Claim 1 in which the service broker uses a single well-known port number address so that the client needs only this well known port number to send a message to the service broker.

4. The method of Claim 1 in which the service obtains a connection point and
20 informs the service broker of the connection point address and the service broker then informs the client of the connection point address.

5. The method of Claim 4 in which the service broker informs the client of the connection point address and the client then uses that address in communicating directly
25 with the server.

6. The method of Claim 4 in which the connection point address is a port number.

7. The method of Claim 4 in which, if a service is required more than once, the
30 server providing the service will not be re-started, but instead the service broker uses cached address information.

8. The method of Claim 1 in which, when services register with the service broker, they register a version number to indicate the version of the service that they are providing.

5 9. The method of Claim 8 in which the client can request a specific version of a named service or it can omit the version, in which case the service broker will start the highest version available of the named service.

10 10. The method of Claim 1 in which the service broker enables multiple services installed on a single, second computing device to serve one or more external clients that are PCs or other computers connected by a local link such as cable, Infra-Red or short distance radio (such as Bluetooth) or by a remote link such as a network data connection.

11 11. The method of Claim 1 in which the service broker provides authentication information such that only authenticated external clients can access services.

12 12. A computing device comprising (a) a server that connects to a first computing device, and (b) a service broker to which a service installed on the computing device registers its published name and which receives a message from the first computing device specifying that name; wherein the published name of the service conforms to a structured naming convention.

13 13. The device of Claim 12 in which the service broker is programmed such that the structured naming convention uses reversed domain information.

25 14. The device of Claim 12 in which the service broker uses a single well-known port number address.

30 15. The device of Claim 12 in which the service obtains a connection point and informs the service broker of the connection point address and the service broker then informs the client of the connection point address.

16. The device of Claim 15 in which the service broker informs the client of the connection point address and the client then uses that address in communicating directly with the server.

5 17. The device of Claim 15 in which the connection point address is a port number.

18. The device of Claim 15 in which, if a service is required more than once, the server providing the service will not be re-started, but instead the service broker uses cached address information.

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19. The device of Claim 12 in which, when services register with the service broker, they register a version number to indicate the version of the service that they are providing.

15 20. The device of Claim 19 in which the client can request a specific version of a named service or it can omit the version, in which case the service broker will start the highest version available of the named service.

20 21. The device of Claim 12 in which the service broker can serve external clients that are PCs or other computers connected by a local link such as cable, Infra-Red or short distance radio (such as Bluetooth) or by a remote link such as a network data connection.

22. The device of Claim 12 in which the service broker provides authentication information such that only authenticated external clients can access services.

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